

**An Assessment of a USAID
Grant to UNICEF/Rwanda for
Program on Unaccompanied Children
Affected by War**

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An assessment of a USAID, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, Office of Health and Nutrition (G/PHN/HN), United States Agency for International Development. The Evaluation was conducted by the Health Technical Services Project of TvT Associates, Inc., Project No. 936-5974.10, Contract Number HRN-5974-Q-00-3002-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Agency for International Development or TvT Associates.

**An Assessment of a Grant to UNICEF
"Unaccompanied Children Affected by War".**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEDC	Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances
DCOF	Displaced Children & Orphans Fund
G/PHN/HN	Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, Office of Health & Nutrition, USAID
GA	Grant Agreement
HARR	Humanitarian Assistance, Recovery and Rehabilitation, USAID/Rwanda
HPO	Health Population & Nutrition Officer
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OYB	Operational Year Budget
REDSO	Regional Economic Development Support Office
REO	Rwandan Emergency Operations
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SAVE/US	(SCF/USA) Save the Children Federation, USA
SCF/UK	Save the Children Fund, United Kingdom
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

This joint report covers the period of work in Rwanda by Rob Robertson and Gene Chiavaroli, from February 21 to March 1, 1995.

Prior to travelling to Rwanda on Feb. 21, the consultants met in Addis Ababa to jointly review documents made available by USAID Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, Office of Health and Nutrition (G/PHN/HN) and to agree on responsibilities for meeting the team's Scope of Work. Following seven days of discussions with appropriate representatives of USAID, Government of Rwanda (GOR), UNICEF, UNHCR, ICRC, Save the Children Federation of the United Kingdom (SCF/UK) and Save the Children, United States (SAVE/US), and several field trips, the assessment team returned to Addis on March 1 to write this report.

The time and support given by G/PHN/HN, USAID/Rwanda, UNICEF, SCF/UK, SAVE/US, etc., greatly enabled us to complete the field work within the short time available.

Our Scope of Work identified five major issues; our report is organized along similar lines. These five issues are:

- Compliance by the Grantees, UNICEF, SCF/UK and SAVE/US to the terms of their respective grants.
- Coordination and cooperation among the various parties to the program.
- Status and interrelationships of NGO project for child tracing and family reunification (SCF/UK) and psychosocial interventions (SAVE/US).
- Appropriateness of the SAVE/US proposal, "Building Life Skills and Economic Opportunities".
- FY 1995 funding opportunities under the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund.

1. Assessment of Grant Terms and Compliance.

All parties are agreed that there is no need, at this time, to modify the terms of the original USAID Grant to UNICEF; the terms therein remain appropriate and valid. UNICEF is in general compliance with the terms of the Grant. The names of some GOR Ministries have changed and responsibilities among Ministries for problems affecting unaccompanied children have shifted but these must be, and have been, dealt with on an ad hoc basis.

Regarding the UNICEF sub-grants to SCF/UK and SAVE/US, the parties concerned are satisfied that the terms therein remain valid and appropriate. Incidentally, the term "sub-grant" is not favored by UNICEF. It considers these agreements as direct grants to the NGO from UNICEF in which some USAID money is involved along with monies from other sources.

An attachment to the Grant Agreement (and presumably incorporated into the Grant) from USAID to UNICEF is the "Interagency Plan of Action for Unaccompanied Rwandan Children." This document establishes goals for a broad range of activities important to the welfare of unaccompanied children. We believe that several of these goals are unrealistic, particularly those related to the physical and mental health of children. The goals set forth in the UNICEF subsequent grants to SCF/UK and SAVE/US are more realistic. They correspond to UNICEF's Detailed Implementation Plan and should be the governing documents for any USAID project evaluation.

Even then, we, the consultants, do have a concern about the optimistic targets and the specificity of the first year targets agreed to in the SCF/UK and SAVE/US grants. The events that have resulted in tragically large numbers of unaccompanied children, the political and environmental conditions under which they now find themselves, and the extreme difficulty faced by these NGOs in mobilizing their programs, simply have no parallel. Within this context, at the time these sub-grants were developed, specific target numbers perhaps should have been avoided or dealt with as optimum possibilities.

Insofar as compliance with terms of the USAID and UNICEF grants, our discussions left us with a high degree of confidence that the overall goal of the USAID grant will come close to being achieved. Our assessment is that the long-term professional staff in positions of responsibility with UNICEF and with the two NGOs are top quality experts but are also people possessed of common sense who can adjust to emerging conditions and achieve the targeted results. We were actually encouraged by one NGO manager's lack of anxiety over possible failure to meet numerical targets; the best that can be done is being done and that's it.

2. Issues of Cooperation and Coordination.

The GOR's basic policy with regard to unaccompanied children is clear:

A child is best cared for in his/her own family; reunification of children with their own families is the first priority. Institutional care (children's centers, orphanages, etc.) are to be temporary. Every effort will be made to locate families, first immediate and then extended, with whom the child can be reunited. Foster families within the child's home community will be the third level of resort if family is not found. Only in the rare case will children be permitted to remain in institutional settings.

This policy has been disseminated to local levels, including the managers of children's centers; there is widespread agreement with the policy and cooperation with the program.

Collaboration and Cooperation: Any critique of the degree to which there was cooperation and collaboration on assistance to unaccompanied children by the international organizations, particularly the UN family, the NGOs and the government has to be put into context. The events of April, 1994, occurred almost instantaneously. The former government disappeared virtually overnight. The war conditions created logistics nightmares. The need to work together was present in everyone's planning but doing it was considerably more difficult. A vacuum of support had to be filled swiftly and, basically, it was. As hostilities ceased and some of the major problems (food, water, health care) were solved, increasing attention was paid to the need to involve the new government and to coordinate efforts. Serious impediments still remain including a relatively under staffed and under provisioned government; a proliferation of NGOs, each with very specific mandates; and continuing logistics difficulties.

It is our assessment that, given the prevailing conditions, coordination and collaboration has been more than satisfactory and is improving weekly. Having said that, we offer the following critique.

UNICEF-UNHCR: UNICEF admits that initial problems of coordination and responsibility arose because it was not able to staff up rapidly and adequately enough to provide the substantial support agreed upon with UNHCR. Staffing problems, in fact, continue to plague UNICEF and other UN relief agencies, largely due to the short-term nature of the expertise being brought in. UNICEF is now staffing with long-term people and should be able to provide the continuity necessary to carry out both its relief and regular programs. Specifically with regard to the "unaccompanied children" program, coordination among UNICEF, UNHCR, ICRC and the NGO community appears to be working well. UNREO is providing adequate coordination of NGOs (not all NGOs want to be coordinated); UNICEF is providing adequate guidance to the NGOs with which it is working in Rwanda; and, reportedly, UNHCR is adequately meeting its coordination mandate in the camps in bordering countries. (See Section 3, Child Tracing and Family Reunification, for further discussion of coordination.)

The GOR point of view: As the new government settles in and begins to feel its oats, it is eager to play a larger role in planning, strategizing and monitoring donor programs. One

Minister with whom we discussed programs and strategies, while not citing specific activities with which the government disagreed, did state strongly that the UN agencies and the NGOs are usurping the traditional role of the government and are ignoring the GOR in planning and coordinating projects. Other Ministries have the same complaint. Only the government can determine that a donor initiated project will be able to be sustained, financially and managerially, by the government.

UNICEF, SAVE/US and SCF/UK state that their activities and strategies were indeed developed with GOR input and agreement and are in accord with those of the GOR. We heard nothing from government officials at any level to dispute this. Nonetheless, UNICEF is aware of the issues raised by the government and has indicated that it is working hard to include all appropriate Ministries in planning and developing projects. Both viewpoints are likely to be accurate. The Minister made an accurate generalization. Afterall, there are over a hundred NGOs running around the country and the UN organizations are into many activities at many levels.

USAID grantees are working well with the GOR in strategic planning and project development at national and local levels. This cooperative relationship will further improve as experienced professionals arrive to staff Grantee activities.

The three grant documents relevant to the USAID program and subsequent action plans were discussed with the GOR, though perhaps not to the extent of detail in development that the Minister envisages. Also the content of such a discussion at one level in a given Ministry, or even the fact that it occurred, would not always be communicated up the line within the Ministry and even less often to other Ministries.

There has been considerable confusion as to which Ministry is in charge of a given activity, possibly abetted by the tendency of NGOs to latch onto the Ministry of their choice rather than being guided to one by the GOR. A positive step toward eliminating this problem is the recent formation of a Ministerial Commission composed of representatives from all the concerned Ministries. This Commission will define which Ministry is responsible for which activity.

3. NGO Projects.

A. Child Tracing and Family Reunification

An estimated 22,000 children live in 93 centers; 11,500 of the children are in Rwanda, the balance in camps in bordering countries. There is evidence that many of the children living in

centers can be reunited with families, particularly in the Zaire camps; thus an escalation of the tracing program in centers has begun. There are, nonetheless, isolated centers which are not cooperating in the child registration/family tracing program, apparently in an effort to maintain their institutions as orphanages. Children in these centers have become caught up in the business of running centers - and thus being eligible for donor funds which are earmarked for orphans. Reportedly, children have been hidden from visiting social workers and their names changed to prevent families from reclaiming them. The government has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Unaccompanied Children which has the authority to force the closing of centers in Rwanda which are not adhering to government policy.

Registration and reunifications: Save the Children Federation/UK (SCF/UK) has been designated by the government - and recognized by the UN agencies and the NGO community - as the lead agency in registering unaccompanied children and in family tracing and reunification within the confines of the Rwanda border. The ICRC is responsible for documenting children in the camps in the bordering countries; UNHCR is key in family reunification in these neighboring countries. The total number of separated Rwandan children is estimated to be 85,000, including the children in centers (a reasonably accurate figure since they can be counted), children in refugee camps, in foster care and on the streets. Of this number registration and documentation of approximately half (41,850) has been completed.¹

Situation Update		
Unaccompanied Children:		
Rwanda	40,000	
Other countries		45,000
Registered/documented		
Rwanda	10,000	
Other countries		31,850

Spontaneous reunifications, i.e. initiated by family members themselves, constitute the majority of the first wave of reunifications though the number of self-initiated reunifications can only be guessed at. Family reunification assisted by international organizations remain relatively few, numbering just over 3,000, of which 1,610 have occurred within Rwanda.

It is unlikely that SCF/UK will meet its target of 2,000 family reunifications within the first year of the program. Documentation of children in centers should be completed by the end of March but the real work on family reunification lies ahead and will involve meticulous work both with other NGOs in tracing techniques and with communities all over the country. In retrospect, the reunification target is too ambitious given the need to mobilize and train staff, to register children and to put into place a tracing process as prerequisites to family reunification. However, family reunifications within the camps in Goma and Bukavu should, with some little additional effort by UNHCR and/or the NGOs working in these camps, proceed much more swiftly. UNHCR is of the opinion that the majority of unaccompanied children in the children's centers in these camps

¹Taken from an internal report for UNICEF's Children in Especially Difficult Conditions (CEDC) section, Feb. 21, 1995.

have parents living within the camps. Reunification in these camps has not moved faster either because the information network is not working (bulletin boards, posters, etc. are needed) or parents believe that the centers offer a more advantageous situation for the children. A concerted reunification effort is needed in the camps by UNICEF, UNHCR and the NGOs.

Protection and confidentiality: All parties with whom we discussed the question of protection and confidentiality of information on unaccompanied children and their families were agreed on the need for strict controls to assure that information remains protected and confidential. This is easier said than done and, in fact, a policy of strict confidentiality of all information may impede the family reunification program. While ICRC and SCF/UK are the two principal agencies involved in registering/documenting children and families, they are by no means the only agencies. Other NGOs, children centers and government entities are using either the SCF/UK or ICRC forms to register and/or document children, and then passing the information to SCF/UK.

The Government did request SCF/UK to provide access to all documentation files. SCF/UK was reluctant, understandably, to release this information but eventually agreed to provide the government with documentation on children in Rwanda. (The government could, in practice, trace and register these children themselves, though this is not likely to happen.) According to SCF/UK, providing documentation data to the government has become a non-issue; since SCF/UK agreed to give access to the information, the government has not requested any files. ICRC provides the registration data on children in the refugee camps to UNHCR. Neither SCF/UK nor ICRC has agreed to make available any files on children outside of Rwanda, nor have they. Information is not passed across borders - though ICRC provides the names of separated children to SCF/UK on those being returned to Rwanda from across the border. In addition, SCF/UK meets all UNHCR trucks transporting people back to Rwanda in order to assure complete documentation of unaccompanied children and parents looking for missing children.

Compatibility of information sets: Computerized systems used by SCF/UK and ICRC, the principal agencies registering and documenting children, are not compatible. The documentation or registration forms used by the two agencies are different. The SCF/UK documentation form is more complete than the ICRC registration form, providing additional information which could prove helpful in locating the child's family. The ICRC data is entered and stored in Nairobi; the SCF/UK data is entered and stored at their regional offices and in Kigali. According to SCF/UK, the absence of compatibility of either forms or data processing initially presented some problems but they have not been fatal to the registration process and the family reunification program. Neither organization thinks that it is worth the effort, at this point, to try to reconcile data systems and, given the worldwide character of the ICRC system, such a step is probably not possible. Other NGOs and children centers are, by and large, using the SCF/UK documentation forms.

Technology upgrades: There are no plans by SCF/UK to upgrade the level of technology being used to photograph children and trace families. UNICEF and SCF/UK both believe that

the process of registration should move as quickly as possible, and while digital photography, CD-ROM, provision of notebook computers to rural centers and offices, etc., will be piloted to determine practicability, there are no plans to move full scale to a new process. SCF/UK is particularly concerned that the technology to be used remain appropriate to Rwandan conditions and expertise levels.

Photographs are only one tool that is useful in family tracing, and it is most effective with infants and young children who are not able to identify their commune of origin. Twelve percent of the unaccompanied children are under the age of five, 28% between the ages of five and ten. Thus, the large majority of children should be able to identify their commune of origin. What is then needed is appropriate information networking to locate families, and logistics to enable contacts to be made and children to be reunited with their families.

Foster homes and follow-up: While good data is not yet available, it is becoming apparent that most Rwandan families are caring for children other than their own. An estimate of the number of children in foster families is 53,000 but the number could be significantly higher since many families took in children of relatives; these children are not reported. The team met several Rwandans who are caring for two, three and four children of dead relatives.

The ability of SCF/UK to do follow-up of reintegrated and foster families is only beginning to be tested but it is clear that additional planning and probably additional resources will be needed to implement a satisfactory follow-up program. There is hear-say evidence that some families who took in foster children during and immediately after the war, now find that, for a variety of reasons, they cannot or do not wish to continue. This problem emphasizes, as well, the need for thorough review of any prospective placement to determine that it is appropriate. It is inevitable, even with a thorough pre-placement review, that mismatches will occur; they should be terminated as soon as possible and with the least possible disruption to the child's routine.

SCF/UK has developed "Guidelines for Assessing Substitute Family Care in the Community". The difficulty lies in the implementation, given the relatively few staff members available to SCF/UK, the need to complete the documentation of children, and the dispersed areas to be covered in the follow-up program. Options to effective implementation of the follow-up program should include, as a minimum the use of a wide range of other NGOs, particularly community based indigenous NGOs.

Institutional support to the appropriate Ministry(ies) to enable government to assume responsibilities for the policy, planning and monitoring aspects of the program would also be appropriate. SCF/UK has given this issue considerable thought and is, we believe, prepared to submit a proposal for additional assistance to USAID. (See Section 5, Future Programming.)

Follow-up on children placed in foster homes may require additional resources. As a minimum, more community level involvement is needed.

B. Treating psychosocial disorders.

There is uniform agreement that psychosocial disorders affect thousands of children (and

adults) who witnessed and may have participated in violence during the war. A rapid assessment conducted by UNICEF, while admittedly of a very small sample, nevertheless gives some indication of the extent to which children have reason to be traumatized.

- 91% of the children surveyed experienced death in their immediate family; 42% have both parents dead.
- 65% witnessed a killing.
- 90% of the children surveyed were forced to hide during the atrocities; 45% hid alone.
- 73% were, at some point, separated from their families.
- 64% witnessed massacres.
- 47% saw children killing children.
- 48% were threatened with death.

UNICEF was invited by the Rwandan Ministry of Rehabilitation to collaborate with the government and various NGOs on a program to treat child psychosocial disorders caused by the war. UNICEF has, we believe, provided excellent leadership in this area, using Rwandans trained in child psychology and with wide, relevant experience. They are working on mass media information and education campaigns, on training of trainers and on program management. UNICEF works with over 30 NGOs in this effort; meetings are held every two weeks to update the situation, to discuss problems and approaches, and to plan expanded initiatives. To date, 1,649 community based social agents, all primary health care givers such as teachers, clinic staff, etc., have been trained in identification of trauma signs and symptoms and in techniques for trauma alleviation. These agents are, in themselves creating one of the few social support groups in the country since so many groups, even the church, have been discredited by wartime activities.

In addition to its work with psychosocial disorders among children, the UNICEF program is implementing a "Women in Violence and Rape" program, one important element of which will be to work with women who are now beginning to deliver babies resulting from rape.

Save the Children/US: SAVE/US has made a good beginning in its psychosocial treatment program, concentrating first in the children's centers, and now moving into community settings. The SAVE/US program has a different approach than UNICEF; SAVE/US uses younger primary health care providers (boy scouts and girl guides, older students, etc.) whereas UNICEF is using more mature social workers, teachers, etc. Of all of the groups that we talked with, the psychosocial treatment efforts of both UNICEF and SAVE/US have made the best effort to identify, work with and strengthen local groups, including indigenous NGOs and local communities. We did not see a similar effort being undertaken in the family reunification and fostering efforts. SAVE/US has also drawn on experience gained

International organizations, NGOs and donors should redouble efforts to identify indigenous groups, particularly local communities, as partners in their programs.

by other NGOs and has made extensive use of the UNICEF expertise in trauma treatment. SAVE/US indicated that UNICEF has provided less guidance on where SAVE/US could best deploy its resources.

SAVE/US indicated that they have directly affected 2,300 children in 11 centers. SAVE/US coordinates with the SCF/UK child documentation and family reunification efforts with information flowing in both directions. SAVE/US terminated work in two centers where it has become clear that these centers do not intend to participate in or facilitate family reunification efforts and are, in some instances, hindering family reunification. Both SAVE/US and UNICEF stated that they will continue to monitor such centers to be certain that children are not the losers and in the hope and expectation that the center managers will eventually buy into the family reunification program.

SAVE/US has not been involved in follow-up; this is the responsibility of SCF/UK. SAVE/US is prepared to be of assistance.

4. The SAVE/US Proposal, "Building Life Skills and Economic Opportunities"

The SAVE/US Program Director and Field Office Director provided details and responded to our concerns about the "Building Life Skills and Economic Opportunities" project proposal. We also raised the concept of the project, if not the project itself, in virtually all of our discussions. Our concerns centered around several issues.

- a. Is this project the best use of almost \$1 million? The project is peri-urban based, yet the vast majority of youth are based in the countryside--and given the scarcity of employment in the urban areas, they should be encouraged to remain there. Rural communities, secondary beneficiaries of the effort, are also in need of the kinds of interventions proposed by the project. We suggested that the project be extended to rural communities with food production activities included.

SAVE/US indicated that their assessment of the evolving situation is that a beginning should be made in the urban and peri-urban areas. These areas already contain large numbers of adolescents who are not likely, for a variety of reasons, to return to the rural life no matter what opportunities might arise. The peri-urban areas feed into the food security chain; some of those skills which SAVE/US will emphasize do support food production. Further, the areas chosen for the project, Kigali, Ruhengeri, Butare and Rwamagana, will require substantial rebuilding, thus offering employment possibilities, particularly for adolescent males with basic skills. SAVE/US, with its own funds, has begun some small activities similar to those contained in the proposal. This small experience gives it confidence that the project can make a contribution to the reintegration of adolescents into communities through small economic activities.

The Minister with whom we met stated the intention to launch small income generating projects for adolescents and women. The projects would be tailored to needs and resources of the region and commune; plantings in one area, animal husbandry in another, fisheries, brick making, etc. These types of activities are briefly mentioned as possible within the SAVE/US proposal; more emphasis could be placed thereon.

- b. Can SAVE/US complete the program within the time frame proposed? Will USAID make a commitment for full funding of the proposal?

Save/US acknowledges that the project will be a medium-term development project, and will require follow-on funding. It is confident that it can get it from somewhere. We are less confident.

Virtually everyone with whom we spoke on this issue was in agreement that the idea was sound and should go forward. The Assessment Consultant Team recommends funding of the two year project.

5. Future Programming for Displaced Children, Orphans and War Victims in Rwanda

The children of Rwanda have been caught up in a civil war since 1990, a war which culminated in unprecedented and unspeakable atrocities between the months of April and July, 1994. During this short period of armed violence, close to one million people may have lost their lives, many of them infants and children. Helping children and their care givers cope with the physical, psychological and social consequences of the war is a first priority in any effort to ensure the overall well-being of Rwandan children.

There are a number of programs being undertaken by the international community to address the needs of the population, particularly children, affected by the war. These have been, by and large, programs of an "emergency relief" nature. Now, however, Rwandans and the donor community are beginning to consider the options for moving beyond immediate relief to development efforts which will have a longer-term impact. A strategic plan which can guide further USAID investments of the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund should consider both what remains to be completed in immediate and emergency relief and in preparing for sustainable development.

Program objectives.

- Projects are to focus on and directly and immediately benefit children. Children are to be put into a safe and familiar environment as quickly as possible.
- Capacity building of government and indigenous NGOs whose primary objective is the child will be supported.

- Projects will be short-term in scope, with objectives achievable within a three year period.

Priority areas for intervention.

Institutional development: This effort should focus on the principal government institutions responsible for policy, strategy and quality control of programs dealing with displaced children and orphans. This would include training of Ministry staff, particularly at the field level. Appropriate Ministries would include Family and Advancement of Women; Rehabilitation and Social Integration; Labor and Social Welfare; and Youth and Sports. The development of a program to provide institutional support to the public sector would also assist the government in thinking through its organizational structure. There has been a proliferation of Ministries mandated the responsibility for children in distressed circumstances with the danger that there will be competition for limited resources and, in the end, no Ministry being truly accountable for the program.

Any project dealing with distressed children should also be required to involve indigenous organizations and groups in the planning and execution of the program. The financial support required will be minimal; the benefits enormous.

Additional funding to present UNICEF Grant: USAID funding provided to UNICEF and thus to SCF/UK and SAVE/US covers first year requirements only. UNICEF as well as the two NGOs believe that funding to continue the programs will be found because of the worldwide interest in support family integration and treatment of psychosocial disorders among children. Should other donor funding not materialize to continue the UNICEF efforts, the first priority for USAID should be to continue these programs. This would include:

1. Identification and treatment of children suffering psychosocial disorders brought on by the war.

Community and group-based counselling and support programs offer the best means to affect the greatest number of children within the shortest period of time. These organizations can be offered training in providing counselling. Village chiefs, elders and other leaders, who are often refugees with the other villagers, can be the conduit for continued counselling and support when/if the community returns home.

UNICEF sees psychosocial disorders among children as a priority effort for its own future programming. Several other donors and NGOs also see this as a priority and would be willing to fund it if appropriate interventions could be identified.

The USAID intervention would include support to UNICEF and the SAVE/US programs in psychosocial disorder identification, treatment and counselling, with a heavy emphasis on enlisting the community's support and assistance. This approach would benefit primarily the

children who have been traumatized by the war, but also their families and communities who have also been traumatized. Child soldiers and child prisoners, not now included within the present scope of the USAID Grant, should be included if additional tranches of funding are made available.

2. Placement follow-up.

SCF/UK has identified the need for additional resources for the follow-up phase to its child registration, family reunification program. The proposal, which is still in conceptualization stage, includes having a number of field agents who would visit and stay in communities for a week or so in order to assess, over a longer period, the situation with regard to children placed in family alternative situations. We believe that this enhanced follow-up program should include the real and substantial involvement of community groups to effect the monitoring of foster-family situations.

The young girl affected by the war: Virtually no research has been undertaken relative to young girls who have been affected by the war. Presumably their numbers should approach those of young boys. If the experience of other countries applies to Rwanda, it will be easier to place young girls in foster families. What is not clear is the conditions under which they are living, the work that they are required to do, whether they are being exploited, sexually abused or otherwise mistreated.

These is also only a vague estimate of the numbers of girl child soldiers. No research is available on their experiences, the trauma that they have undergone or the efforts that will be needed to reintegrate them into their families and communities. Nor is there any solid information on the number of young girls who were raped and may now be about to bear the child of the rape.

USAID interventions should include an operations research program undertaken by an appropriate NGO. The objective of the program would be to learn more about the situation of these young girls while developing appropriate options for meeting their social and material needs. Institutional capacity building of the Ministry of Family and Advancement of Women would be a part of the project. Training of staff, particularly field personnel, to better assist them to understand the nature and gravity of the problem and then to develop appropriate responses.

Economic activities for reintegrated youth.

The program to identify unaccompanied children and place them back with their families or alternative support groups, has found that a major impediment to placing children in supportive situations (with one parent, with extended families, in foster homes, etc.) is the overall poverty of the potential support group. A widow, for example, is often unable to reclaim her children from an orphanage or from the street because she cannot feed and care for another person. Extended families, village communities, etc. are under the same constraints.

As/if peace comes to Rwanda and the return to villages accelerates, additional encouragement and support will be needed to return children to a more normal situation. Food (presumably made available through relief efforts such as the WFP program), clothing, tools, seeds, and perhaps some initial monetary support may be the inducement needed, particularly to extended families and to foster homes, to assure that these children are satisfactorily returned to their home communities. A similar situation will prevail among children being demobilized from the two armies who will be facing an uncertain future. Material support will be needed to encourage them to return to their villages and farms. The SAVE/US program is a step in the right direction. SAVE/US or another NGO should build on this program, concentrating on the rural youth and food security issues and involve the entire rural community in the planning and development of a program to increase economic activities among youth.

Implementation Options.

The Assessment Team discussed obligation and implementation options with the USAID/Rwanda staff though not with Myron Golden, the Mission Director who is resident in Bujumbura.

The options include:

Grant funding out of Washington vs an OYB transfer to USAID/Rwanda and obligation in the field.

We believe, from our discussions with mission officers, that their preferred option is an OYB transfer and field obligation, particularly as the emergency and relief projects evolve into medium-term development efforts. The USAID recognizes, however, that it must first make a determination that it has the staff time and expertise to do the work. The mission is thinly staffed and is likely to remain so. Its ability to prepare documentation and to manage Grants is limited. The Regional Support Office (REDSO) in Nairobi can provide legal and contracting assistance but REDSO staff time is also limited. USAID/Rwanda, on the other hand, is closest to the problem, is quickly establishing strong rapport with government officials and is best placed to assess the performance of NGOs working in Rwanda. The Mission is the vehicle for working with Rwandan government officials and NGOs.

Funding of displaced children efforts through UNICEF.

The present Grant was negotiated by USAID/Washington with UNICEF; UNICEF initiated its grants with SCF/UK and SAVE/US.

UNICEF has done a good job of managing the Grant for results. There are clear advantages to using the UNICEF grant route. It is a relatively painless process for USAID and it passes the management burden to UNICEF. UNICEF has a stable of experts who can provide technical and managerial support to a project. A further advantage is that UNICEF, with access to private and other donor sources of funding, can complement USAID funding and can continue worthwhile efforts with recourse to USAID. Working relations between UNICEF and USAID appear to be

excellent so that it is reasonably certain that UNICEF will consult with USAID on project direction and implementation.

Direct grants to NGOs.

The NGOs, naturally, prefer direct Grants from USAID. Though their agreement is with UNICEF, the NGOs realize that they have to respond to USAID requests for time and information. In effect, the NGOs have two bosses. Also, most of the U.S. NGOs are well aware of USAID documentation and reporting processes; they are less familiar with those of UNICEF.

How and where future funds under the Disabled Children and Orphans Fund are obligated can only be determined after further discussions among the Mission, REDSO/EA, AFR and the Global Bureau. The Assessment Team supports the Mission position that it be substantially involved in the planning, development, and monitoring of Grant activities, whatever obligating mechanism is decided upon.

OFFICIAL CONTACTS

- 2/21 UNICEF: Meeting with Carol Jaenson, Director, Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances Division.
- 2/22 USAID: Myron Golden, Director, Burundi & Rwanda; Jack Hjelt, Deputy Director, Kigali; Christine Hjelt, Humanitarian Assistance Recovery & Rehabilitation Officer (HARR).
- 2/22 UNICEF: Dan Toole, Resident Representative; Carol Jaenson; Sosthene Bucyana, USAID/HPO.
- SCF/UK: Steven Rifkin, Field Director; Chris Roys, Program Manager; Sara Hill, Training; Wilma Meeus, Community Services Officer.
- 2/23 Ambassador David Rawson and Mrs. Rawson.

ICRC: Meeting with Catherine Gendre, Tracing Coordinator.

2/24 Field trip to Ruhengeri and the Gisenyi area. SCF/UK/Ruhengeri: Meeting with Paul Crook, Field Project Manager; Margaret Scarlett, Training Officer.
Visit to Mugongo (?name?) Transit Children's Center:
Rosamond Carr, Director; luncheon with Mrs.Carr.

2/25 Field Trip to Kanzenze in the Bugasera area. Sous-Prefecture: Meeting with Ferdinand Ngabo, Sous Prefet; Bourgemestre of Kanzenze Commune. Accompanied on trip by Chantal de Montegni, UNREO and Christine Hjelt, USAID.

SAVE/US: Ray Zimmerman, Program Director and Richard Jacquot, Field Office Director.

2/26 UNHCR: Neil Boothby, Country Representative.

USPHS: Admiral Julia Plotnick, Assistant Surgeon General; Jack and Christine Hjelt, USAID.

UNICEF: Meeting with Serge Rwamasirabo, Head, Nutrition and Food Security Division.

2/27 Visit to the Welcome Center for Non-Accompanied Children, Association Amour de Jesus, Kigale: Meeting with Aloys Simpunga, Director General. Accompanied by Ray Torres, Project Officer, UN Rwanda Emergency Operation.

Ministry of Family and Promotion of Women: Meeting with the Minister, Mrs. Aloysia Inyumba; Christine Hjelt and Sosthene Bucyana of USAID, and Buddy Shanks, OFDA, also present.

2/28 USAID: Meeting with Jack Hjelt, Deputy Director; Christine Hjelt, HARR Officer; Buddy Shanks, OFDA Relief Officer.

UNICEF: Dan Toole, Resident Representative; Mrs.Gupta, Psychosocial Trauma Program Manager; Ray Torres.

